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A NEW MUSEUM TABLET.

FRANK C. BAKER.

For the past five years the writer has been experimenting upon a durable and convenient museum tablet, which would remain perfectly flat when the label and specimens were attached, and which would give the largest amount of exhibition room with a minimum of label area. Such a tablet has been worked out by the writer and a short description of it may be of interest to those having the same problem to meet. I might say, however, that the idea was first conceived while examining the tablets in the American Museum of Natural History, New York, upon which are mounted Hall's types of fossils.

The foundation is No. 20 binder's board, which has been found quite heavy enough for all practical purposes. About the edge of this is bound black gummed paper, similar to that used for binding lantern slides. The center for the specimens and label is next prepared, and for this the writer has selected a grade of manilla cardboard identical with that used for herbarium genus covers ; this is of a rich cream color and does not fade when exposed to the light, and presents a surface admirably setting off the black, full-faced type used. At a first glance a finished tablet appears as though made of ivory. This board is cut just enough smaller than the tablet to allow a black border of an eighth of an inch. For very light specimens a black center is used, cut just small enough to allow an eighth of an inch of light margin between it and the black border of the tablet, and also to leave room for the label which is generally 3×1 inch.

In securing a good black the writer was compelled to resort to a thin black paper used by paper-box manufacturers, as no printer seemed able to print a uniform black, the first ones printed being gummy, and the last shading into a gray. The

black center is first pasted upon a manilla board with *good library* paste, and then the board is attached to the tablet by simply gumming the *edges* with a thin solution of Le Page's glue poisoned with corrosive sublimate to keep insects away. At this point the tablet must be placed under a press to dry, in order to avoid warping. The writer has used thin sheets of lead for this purpose, which have been very successful.

After drying for three or four hours the tablet is ready for the labels and specimens; the former being printed upon the same stock as the tablet cover, and attached by putting a few drops of glue upon the ends and in the middle, and placed under a press for an hour or so. For order, class, family, etc., a tablet 3×1 inch has been adopted and the printed label glued to it. For genera a tablet $3 \times \frac{1}{2}$ inch has been found desirable. The tablets have been graded in the following sizes, the unit width being three inches: 3×2 , 3×4 , 3×6 , 3×9 , 6×6 , 9×9 . These sizes will accommodate any specimens save those which should be placed in special upright cases. The larger tablets, 6×6 and 9×9 , will need to have a piece of heavy paper pasted on the reverse side, to keep them from warping. The specimens are attached to the tablets with Le Page's glue.

The expense of these tablets will not exceed one and a half cents each, and several hundred can be manufactured in a day. A case installed in this manner presents a handsome appearance and greatly increases the facility for examination.

It has been urged by some that the tray is better adapted to museum purposes than the tablet, on account of the danger of mixing species. In answer to this the writer would say that the collections of the Chicago Academy of Sciences have been mounted upon tablets for the past six years, and up to the present time no mixing has taken place. Of course care must be used, with the tray equally as with the tablets, to guard against accidents. The new tablet spoken of above has been in use in the institution mentioned for the past five months.